

Salem City
Electoral Board Minutes
Voter Registration Office
Salem City Council Chambers
March 27, 2020

Attendees: Chair-Everette Obenshain, Vice Chair - Steve Smeltzer, Secretary- Katherin Elam and Director of Elections - Dana Oliver (ill)

The meeting was called to order at 4:33pm by the Chair.

Minutes from the March 3rd Salem Electoral board meeting were signed and approved.

The pandemic and social distancing has impacted how the upcoming May City Council election will be conducted. The election was first scheduled for May 5, by order of Governor Northam the election has been rescheduled for Tuesday, May 19. Since the pandemic the general public was instructed to apply for an absentee ballot, marking reason 2A to obtain a ballot. The deadline for getting all absentee ballot requests in has been pushed back from April 28 to May 12.

Now that a final date has been set the Registrar staff and electoral board will contact Jay Overby to get our ballots loaded on at least one machine per precinct and one-two backups.

Polling Place logistics for the May elections has resulted in the electoral board favoring all Salem voters casting ballots May 19 at the Salem Civic Center. The reason for an emergency vote center is the lack of officers of election willing to work during a pandemic. The preliminary layout for the flow of the election will take place in three stages in three adjoining rooms:

1. Check in at poll books.
2. Privacy screens to fill in the ballot
3. Cast ballot in the voters designated precinct machine.

This scenario will be presented to the Civic Center Director for final approval.

The most important step in setting up an emergency vote center is to have a resolution authored by the City Attorney and then presented to the Salem City Council for approval before submitting it to Office of Elections in Richmond. Following that approval getting notification to the voting public by way of local media, social media, area marquees and placing yard signs at all the traditional polling places directing voters to the Salem Civic Center is required.

To operate an emergency vote center requires at least 20 officers of election, an email will go out to the individuals who were polled early in the pandemic as to their availability on May 19

Polling place conditions will be discussed with the Civic Center staff and the Virginia Medical Reserves Corps (VMRC) that Governor Northam has ready to assist locales on election day until the pandemic passes. Katherin has emailed the VMRC regional director to learn more about their resources, and to suggest that each of their workers take an oath before assisting during election day.

PPE and sanitizing supplies are pertinent to the safety of our election officials, the VA department of Elections has secured some items for our use locally. The Registrar staff is waiting to see or hear what to expect. The board may approach Salem City Streets and General Maintenance to find out what types of sanitation supplies they have, like clear plastic sheets that can be draped from the ceiling to the floor like the local post office has in their customer lobby, stanchions will be needed and tape to mark off six feet as people wait to vote.

The board approved the Central Absentee Precinct prep the absentee ballots one week prior to the election and assign numbers and any other prep work but do not tabulate until May 19. The board also approved the workers in that precinct work the hours 8am -7pm.

The next meeting of the Electoral Board will be May 20 to canvass the City Council election results at 11am.

No further business was discussed, and the electoral board adjourned at 5:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherin A. Elam, Secretary

Everette Obenshain, Jr. Chair

Steve Smeltzer, Vice Chair